

Dear State Legislators,

March 8, 2015

Budget time is never easy in any state and this year Connecticut is no exception. Our state is faced with huge deficits over the next few years with no easily viable way of surmounting that situation. The fact that we must deal with certain fixed and absolute obligations each year increases the difficulty of arriving at a workable budget. This year, with the Governor's promise of no tax increases, the task seems almost insurmountable, yet a solution must be found.

The Governor's proposed budget appears to severely impact funding for the state's most needful people, those struggling to deal with disabilities, served by private and public organizations throughout the state. One of those agencies is Ability Beyond, headquartered in Bethel, and on whose behalf I am writing. I have a long-standing personal connection to Ability Beyond. My parents, along with a handful of others, founded the original organization in 1953 that grew into the organization that exists today. My late brother, Jim, born severely handicapped, was the impetus for their work, and Ability Beyond today continues and amplifies that work to benefit thousands of people for whom it advocates. But that service is costly and, although Ability Beyond receives some private donations, it also depends in large measure on state funding for its programs.

I am asking that the State Legislature, in its review of the Governor's proposed budget retain and/or increase funding for Ability Beyond to the greatest extent possible. I fully understand the difficult decisions that must be made, but I also understand that we are all ultimately defined by how we treat those of our fellow citizens who most need our help. I would ask that you remember them and the organizations that serve them in your deliberations.

Sincerely yours,

John J. Walsh  
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